

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 AGRE-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 /094 W
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P R 241750Z FEB 78 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8684

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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CORRECTED COPY TEXT PARA 3

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ML

SUBJ: TENSIONS IN MALI'S MILITARY COMMITTEE

1. SUMMARY: RUMORS ABOUND IN BAMAKO DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES OF DISSENSION IN MALI'S RULING MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION (CMLN). PRESIDENT TRAORE HAS LEFT CAPITAL CITY. THERE IS EVIDENCE OF INTERNAL TENSION, BUT EMBASSY CONSIDERS AN OPEN BREAK IN MILITARY COMMITTEE UNLIKELY. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCOUNTS ARE PROLIFERATING IN BAMAKO DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES OF INCREASED TENSION WITHIN MALI'S RULING CMLN. ACCORDING TO PREVALENT RUMORS, PRESIDENT TRAORE SOUGHT DISMISSAL OF MINISTER OF DEFENSE DOUKARA AT CMLN MEETING WHICH

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PRECEDED JANUARY 7 MINISTERIAL CHANGES BUT WAS BLOCKED BY DOUKARA SUPPORTERS LED BY CHIEF OF SECURITY SERVICES BAGAYOKO. REPORTS SUGGEST COMMITTEE IS NOW SPLIT, WITH PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION YOUSSEOUF TRAORE AS STRONG MEN ON ONE SIDE; AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE, CHIEF OF SECURITY SERVICES, AND LT. COLONEL JOSEPH MARA AS LEADERS ON THE OTHER. THE PRESIDENT,

VARIOUSLY REPORTED AS SICK OR DEPRESSED BY INABILITY TO CONTROL CMLN, IS ABSENT FROM BAMAKO, POSSIBLY RESTING AT KAYES OR AT PRESIDENTIAL RETREAT NORTH OF SEGOU.

3. FOREGOING RUMORS EMERGE FROM LARGER BACKGROUND OF DIVISIVE FACTORS IN MALIAN BODY POLITIC. THESE INCLUDE:

A. FOOD SHORTAGE. ALTHOUGH FOOD PRICES ARE NOW DECREASING SLIGHTLY Owing TO EFFECT OF EMERGENCY FOOD RELIEF, FOOD SUPPLIES ARE STILL SCARCE AND PRICES INORDINATELY HIGH. MANY MALIANS BLAME PRESIDENT TRAORE DIRECTLY FOR DECISION TO SELL EXCESS GRAIN ABROAD AFTER LAST TWO HARVESTS AND ATTRIBUTE PRESENT FOOD CRISIS TO THAT DECISION. HIGH COST OF FOOD REMAINS PRIME SOURCE OF DISCONTENT AMONG CITY DWELLERS.

B. GOVERNMENT WORKERS ARE STILL WAITING FOR WAGE INCREASE FIRST PROMISED LAST MAY 1. INCREASE PROPOSED BY GOVERNMENT WOULD, HOWEVER, MAINLY BENEFIT TOP BUREAUCRATS. GOVERNMENT ECONOMISTS, IN SETTING UP 10-PERCENT INCREASE (TWO 5-PERCENT INCREMENTS OVER NEXT YEAR), ALSO CHANGED WAGE BASE LINE SO THAT TOP ECHELONS OF BUREAUCRACY WOULD RECEIVE INCREASES UP TO 50,000 FM A MONTH WHILE LOWEST LEVELS WOULD BE RAISED ONLY 3000 FM A MONTH. NATIONAL UNION OF

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MALIAN WORKERS REFUSED TO SIGN GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL AND THREATENED TO TAKE TO THE STREETS IF DIFFERENTIAL WERE NOT SCALED DOWN. IT APPEARS THAT UNION HAS FINALLY WON CMLN AGREEMENT TO MODEST REVISION OF GOVERNMENT PLAN.

C. LEADERSHIP OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS. RECENT CONGRESS OF NATIONAL UNION OF MALIAN WOMEN ABRUPTLY TURNED BACK CANDIDACY OF FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL FATOU TALL, WHO IS RELATED BY BLOOD AND MARRIAGE TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND DIRECTOR OF SECURITY SERVICES. REPORTEDLY, WAS NOT MADAME TALL'S OBVIOUS INCOMPETENCE THAT OCCASIONED HER REMOVAL, BUT RATHER A FALLING-OUT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE, MIRIAM TRAORE. THUS, DESIGNATION OF LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION BECAME POWER PLAY BETWEEN Factions OF MILITARY COMMITTEE. CHOICE OF LEADERS AT FORTHCOMING CONGRESSES OF YOUTH AND UNIONS IS LIKELY TO BE SIMILAR MATTER OF CONTENTION WITHIN CMLN.

4. COMMENT. RUMORS OF TENSION WITHIN CMLN BEGAN THE DAY COMMITTEE TOOK POWER AND HAVE USUALLY FEATURED PRESIDENT AND TWO OTHER MOST POWERFUL COMMITTEE MEMBERS,

MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND DIRECTOR OF SECURITY SERVICES.
WE ARE INCLINED NOT TO BELIEVE THERE WILL BE AN IN-HOUSE COUP OR COUNTERCOUP. BOTH PARTIES HAVE TOO MUCH TO LOSE BY FIGHTING EACH OTHER. POTENTIAL FOR COUP CANNOT BE EXCLUDED, HOWEVER; BAGAYOKO IS VOLATILE AND DOUKARA AMBITIOUS. THERE IS EVIDENCE OF SERIOUS DISCORD WITHIN CMLN AND IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT BOTH SIDES ARE SEEKING TO GARNER POLITICAL SUPPORT WITHIN COMMITTEE AND AMONG MILITARY UNITS.

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5. PRESIDENT'S ABSENCE FROM CAPITAL IS NOT NECESSARILY A SIGN OF WEAKNESS OR DISCOURAGEMENT. ILL HEALTH, INCLUDING STOMACH PROBLEMS, HAS OFTEN BEFORE FORCED BRIEF SECLUSION OR ABBREVIATED WORKLOADS. EACH YEAR THE PRESIDENT TAKES TWO WEEKS' VACATION AND MAY HAVE DECIDED THAT NOW IS THE BEST TIME. WE WOULD EXPECT CMLN MEMBERS EVENTUALLY TO RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES

AND THE PRESIDENT TO RETURN TO GUIDE BUT NOT CONTROL COMMITTEE POLICY.

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